



November 7, 2003

## **Two plead guilty in drugs-for-guns trades**

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### **ATF Task Force and Providence Police arrested Arondae Washington and Robert Ramos in separate but related investigations**

**Arondae Washington**, 26, and **Robert Ramos**, 22, both of Providence, have pleaded guilty to federal charges in connection with trading crack cocaine for guns. Ramos, of 108 Evergreen Street, and Washington, of 101 Lancaster Street, were arrested in August as a result of separate but related investigations by **Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives**.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the guilty pleas, which the defendants entered during separate hearings in U.S. District Court Providence. On November 4, Washington pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi to distributing crack cocaine. On November 5, Ramos pleaded guilty before Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ronald R. Lagueux to distributing crack cocaine and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

According to affidavits filed by an ATF agent in support of complaints brought against the two defendants in August, agents began investigating both men after learning that they were drug dealers interested in obtaining firearms.

#### **Washington**

At Washington's plea hearing on November 4, Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, on August 21, an

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ATF agent and another man met with Washington in a Providence hotel the room. Washington placed four plastic bags of crack cocaine on the bed and took three handguns that were displayed on the bed. Agents arrested him as he left the room.

### **Ramos**

During Ramos' plea hearing on November 5, Assistant U.S. Attorney Neronha said that the government could prove that, at about 6:30 PM on August 21, after declining to do a crack-for-guns trade in the hotel room, **Ramos** arranged a meeting in the hotel's parking lot. He took some guns from the trunk of a car and gave a man some crack cocaine. He was arrested a few hundred yards away after a foot chase. Agents recovered four handguns in the vicinity, having seen Ramos toss them away as he fled.

The statutory maximum penalty for distributing crack cocaine, to which both defendants pleaded guilty, is 20 years imprisonment. The statutory maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm, to which Ramos pleaded guilty, is ten years in federal prison. The defendants' exact sentences will be determined on the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any. Ramos is scheduled to be sentenced on January 29; Washington is scheduled for sentencing on January 23. Both men are detained.

### **Project Safe Neighborhoods**

The investigation was conducted as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. The **ATF Firearms Trafficking and Violent Crimes Task Force** and **Providence Police** conducted the investigations. Investigators from **Providence Police**,

**Rhode Island State Police, Warwick Police, and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office**  
are assigned to the task force.

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